21ST CENTURY LEARNERS IN THE EYES OF A MID-AGED TEACHER

by:

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Seasoned teachers on their mid-life have undeniable passion for alleviating the lives of each learners through education. Their long encounter to the students by means of their selfless service manifests their unique expression of “loco parentis” to all the students who have been part of their ministry as teachers. Nonetheless, it is irrefutable that the classroom they had in the past is no longer the same classroom they are teaching at present. Though everything changed, seasoned teachers’ passion never altered. They love teaching for this is the best way to change the society. However, they are confronted with the challenge on how to deal and best serve the new generation of Filipino learners.

Twenty first century learners are typically characterized as indifferent, introvert, lazy, mass media devotee, aficionado, disrespectful and do not have any interest to learn. They are indifferent because they do not mind others. They do not like to involve themselves to activities that have social relevance. It is not their interest to do voluntary works or even to perform their house duties. Further, they are introvert because they only like to deal with themselves. They prefer to spend more time using their gadgets watching Korean or anime movies and even listening to pop, rap and alternative music.

They are aficionado because they only adhere themselves to what is fad, acceptable and fashionable. The way they communicate and dress up themselves is clear evidence that they follow the materialistic world. Moreover, they are disrespectful because they only respect themselves. They do not mind whoever they talk. They relate with elders as if they are in the same age. Furthermore, the 21st century learners do not have interest in learning. They prefer to sit at the back and not listen to their teacher. They only reason in
attending the class is to be promoted. It is a challenge for mid-aged teachers in this century to motivate them to love learning. Though, it looks helpless and enigmatic, still, it is possible.

Everything has changed. Students before are not the same with the present students. If in the past, the students were just contented with playing outside with their friends, they preferred more to be alone. But it does not mean they are introvert. Maybe nobody understands them. Actually, they like to be acknowledged; they need somebody who would render ones ears to listen to complains and problems. They are not indifferent. They just do not have the initiative to participate and to involve themselves to any activities. But it does not mean they are indifferent. They just experienced to be rejected by somebody who told them that their help is no use. They need somebody who would sympathize with them, to a person that they can call as “mother”. They need mid-aged teachers, who will be their “lola” and somebody who would selflessly stand by their side. Let us allow the children to feel a sense connection between us (Nelsen, 2017).

They are not introvert. They are just very reserved for they do not trust anybody. Their trust is so precious that they do not give immediately this to anybody. One needs to earn their trust by entering fist to their lives. They need somebody to be trusted who will not judge their appearance and actions. Mid-aged teachers will understand them and every time they commit misstates, they will not be judged. Instead, they will show them that actions can be amended for no mistakes can define them as a person.

They are not lazy. They are just preoccupied with many things at home that even the task given them would be forgotten. But they don’t mean to forget those. They tend to forget those because they need to earn a living for their families. They are forced to refocus their attention to the things more important than our classes in order them to survive. Likewise, they are not mass media devotee or internet addicts. They just need an outlet to forget all the problems at home because they feel alone and neglected. Facebook and Twitter give them momentary escape from the reality that no one cares for them.
They play online games not because they cannot control themselves but because this would give them happiness that house and school cannot give.

They are not aficionados for they just need to belong. If they would not follow what others are doing, they will lose friends; thus losing them is so important. The badly needed sense of belong. The will serve as their friend who is willing to be there in times of trouble. In addition, they are not disrespectful. They just do not learn how to use polite words that normal students do. It is an obligation through maternal way to teach them how to be respectful. Be optimistic, they will learn through the course of time. Lastly, they are eager to learn. However, they are just passive in classroom because their stomach is aching for they have eaten their breakfast. It is just too demanding and assuming that they can perform what is being prepared and not thinking they have different way of learning things. It can be also that the lesson is not interesting and method of teaching them is boring. Their capacity is far different from what have in mind. They need special attention. Being the focus of attention is very important to children of their age (University of Minnesota Extension, 2013)

Education has adapted itself to the changing of society. It has dynamically change through the course of time. It has engaged itself to various educational principles and methods in teaching to deliver effectively the competencies that learners out to acquire. Therefore, there are strategies and methods before that are no longer applicable with the current situation. Likewise, it has diverted every classroom into a learner-centered room that takes always the well-being of each learner. It is necessary to imbibe change to serve best the youth even though the gap is evident. This is an urgent call for us not to live on our experiences but to face with grateful heart the new challenges that every classroom is facing. Nevertheless, students need love. Mid-age teacher can still provide them unconditional love because their long dedication is their testimony. Their continuous and selfless passion for the young generation is their pledge “para sa bata, para sa bayan”.

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References
